

NOTEBOOK

Contents of Notebook as presented in the interactive Dating Matters Training.

www.vetoviolence.org/datingmatters

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DATING MATTERS:
UNDERSTANDING TEEN DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Module 1: Lesson 1

Topics and Notes

Teen Dating Violence Terms:

Several different terms can be used to describe Teen Dating Violence.

These terms include:

- > Relationship Abuse
- > Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)
- > Relationship Violence
- > Dating Abuse
- > Domestic Violence

But the preferred term for this course is Teen Dating Violence.

Likewise several different terms can be used to describe the people involved in teen dating violence:

- > Perpetrator
- > Abuser
- > Batterer
- > Victim
- > Survivor
- > Target

The preferred terms in this course will be Perpetrator and Victim.

Teen Dating Violence Definition:

A pattern of violent behavior that someone uses against their partner to cause pain.

Does not have to be physical, it can include emotional abuse and sexual violence.

There are three types of teen dating violence:

- > Emotional Abuse
- > Physical Violence
- > Sexual Violence

Perpetrator Definition:

The person who inflicts the violence.

Victim Definition:

The person on whom the violence is inflicted.

In some couples, one partner may initiate aggressive behavior and the other person may respond aggressively in defense.

In other couples, both partners might be initiating aggressive behavior--so each partner, at times, may behave both as a perpetrator and a victim.

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Module 1: Lesson 1

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Abuse

Emotional Abuse is when one partner wears down the other partner's self worth or self-esteem.

Examples include:

- > Humiliating His/Her Dating Partner
- > Controlling What His/Her Dating Partner Can and Cannot Do
- > Withholding Information from His/Her Dating Partner
- > Deliberately Doing Something to Make His/Her Dating Partner Feel Diminished or Embarrassed
- > Isolating His/Her Dating Partner from Family and Friends

Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse is the intentional use of force.

Examples of physical violence occur when a partner is:

- > Pinched
- > Hit
- > Shoved
- > Kicked
- > Thrown
- > Grabbed
- > Shaken
- > Slapped
- > Chocked
- > Punched

Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse is any sexual act that is forced against someone's will.

Four types of sexual violence exist.

(All types involve victims who either do not consent or are unable to consent to the act.)

1. A completed sex act—including rape, oral sex, or penetration by a hand or object.
2. An attempted (but not completed) sex act.
3. Abusive sexual contact such as intentional touching, either directly or through clothing
4. Non-contact sexual abuse that does not involve physical contact such as voyeurism; intentional exposure of an individual to exhibitionism; pornography; verbal or behavioral sexual harassment; threats of sexual violence; as well as taking (or posting) nude photographs of a sexual nature of another person.

Electronic Aggression

Electronic Aggression is emotional or sexual abuse that carries over to cyberspace like sending unwanted and excessive texts to each other or posting images on the internet. *Examples include:*

- > About 1 in 4 teens in a relationship called or texted their partner every hour between midnight and 5:00 A.M.
 - > About 1 in 3 teens say their partner texted them between 10 and 30 times an hour.
- Questions include:* asking where they are, what they're doing, or who they're with.

Module 1: Lesson 2

Topics and Notes

Development of the Teen Brain

Recent advances in research show that the areas that control impulses, foresee consequences, and temper emotions do not fully develop until an individual is in their early twenties.

The front area of the brain is where advanced cognition, including:

- > Imagination
- > Abstract Thought
- > Judgement of Consequences
- > Planning
- > Controlling Impulses

are developed. When the front area of the brain matures in the early 20's cognitive functions shift from areas of the brain associated with impulse and aggression.

Emotional Development of Teens

Adolescents over the age of 15 can be as capable as adults in focused decision-making situations. However, when emotional, teens often make impulsive, short sighted judgements. When teens find themselves in emotionally-charged situations, the parts of the brain that regulate emotion, rather than reasoning, are more likely to be engaged.

Tasks of Adolescence

- > Accept changing body image
- > Develop a personal value system
- > Prepare for a productive role in society and/or achieve independence from parents
- > Develop an adult identity

Teen Dating Behavior

Because teens are fairly new to dating, they might not be able to recognize that they're in an unhealthy relationship. They often get confused and might mistake their partner's controlling behavior as care or affection. If they do realize they're in an unhealthy relationship, they might not know what to do about it.

Teen Inflorescences

Peers provide a significant source of positive experiences for adolescents, with adolescents reporting that they are most happy when talking with peers. Teenagers see themselves differently when they are with peers compared with parents and teachers.

Research has shown that early adolescents often engage in false self behavior (acting in ways that are not the true self), particularly when among classmates and in romantic relationships.

Module 1: Lesson 2

Continued

Peers influence adolescents in both positive and negative ways:

- > Peers influence academic achievement and positive social behaviors, as well as problem behaviors such as drug and alcohol use, cigarette smoking, and delinquency.
- > Peers do not influence one another during adolescence through coercive pressures; most adolescents are influenced by peers because they admire them and respect their opinions.

Teen Inflorescences

Research indicates that adolescents' relationships with their parents influence their interactions with peers. Teens bring many qualities to their peer relationships that develop early in life as a result of socialization experiences in the family.

People don't realize that parents do have a big impact on kids around the important, "big" issues. Studies find that adolescents from warm, supportive families are more socially competent and report more positive friendships. According to a national survey, teen perceptions of immorality, harm to health, and parental disapproval are far more powerful deterrents to teen drinking and smoking than legal restrictions on the purchase of alcohol and cigarettes.

Module 1: Lesson 3

Topics and Notes

Consequences of Teen Dating Violence for victims

Teenagers experience specific developmental milestones as they journey through adolescence. Young people in unhealthy relationships put their healthy emotional development at risk. And, for both victims and perpetrators, being in a violent relationship makes them more likely to be involved in violent and abusive relationships later in life.

Consequences of Teen Dating Violence for Victims:

- > Engaging in physical fights
- > Depression
- > Suicide attempts
- > Eating disorders
- > Drug and alcohol abuse — binge drinking, etc.
- > Risky sexual behavior — resulting in unintended pregnancy, sexually-transmitted diseases and HIV infections
- > Various medical problems — anxiety, headaches, sleep disturbances, stomach aches
- > Inability to succeed in school or at work (later in life)

Module 1: Lesson 3

Continued

Consequences of Teen Dating Violence for Perpetrators:

- > Alienation from friends and family
- > Loss of friends' respect
- > Loneliness
- > Physical health problems
- > Expulsion from school
- > Loss of job
- > Juvenile or criminal record/confinement

Consequences of Teen Dating Violence seen in School

Consequences of Teen Dating Violence that May be Seen in School:

- > They may become depressed and fail to participate in classroom and school activities
- > They may become disruptive in class
- > They may choose violent behaviors as a defensive measure — to avoid becoming a victim to someone else
- > Their attendance may go down
- > Their academic performance may suffer or fail altogether

Exposure to violence of any kind can increase a person's risk for future violence and abusive relationship behaviors. Whether victim or perpetrator, the impact can be long-lasting.

Module 1: Lesson 4

Topics and Notes

Avoidance to Seek Help by Teens Regarding Teen Dating Violence

Avoidance of help-seeking applies to victims and perpetrators alike. Another study indicated that:

60% of victims did not seek help

79% of perpetrators did not ask for help

Only 32% of male adolescents and 44% of female adolescents who report dating violence seek help.

Teens who do want to seek help for dating violence face many challenges, including:

- > It is difficult for them to ask for help in the first place.
- > They rarely seek help from adult authority figures — parents, educators or professionals of any kind.
- > When they do ask for help, they turn to their friends, and those friends may not offer the best guidance.
- > Their friends typically minimize or avoid their concerns; they provide nurturing rather than solutions.
- > They often believe that unhealthy relationships are the norm — most of the relationships seen on TV, in the movies, or in magazines are not good role models for relationships as they are either unrealistic or unhealthy relationships.

Module 1: Lesson 4

Continued

Reasons Why Some Teens Stay in Violent Relationships:

- > **Love:** Teens may sincerely love their dating partners, even if they hate some of their behaviors.
- > **Confusion:** Teens also may not recognize violent and abusive behaviors. They may be confusing genuine love with dangerous, controlling behaviors. Especially if they have grown up in an abusive and unsupportive family.
- > **Belief you can change your partner:** Teens may cling to the hope that their partners can change if they devote enough effort or time to it.
- > **Promises:** Violent partners may sugarcoat their words and promise the abusive behavior won't happen again.
- > **Denial:** The teen may be thinking, "It could be worse." Trying to downplay the violence as a common reaction.
- > **Shame/Guilt:** Some teens may feel like the violent behavior is their fault, given that their partners may likely blame them for it.
- > **Fear of retaliation or harm:** Teens may be afraid to break up with their partners out of fear that their partners will hurt them or will harm themselves — if the truth were told.
- > **Fear of being alone:** Teens may fear being alone, preferring to remain in a violent relationship than none at all.
- > **Loss of independence:** Telling parents about a violent dating relationship may put a teen's newly acquired independence at risk.
- > **Low self-esteem:** Teen victims may begin to believe — wrongly — that they deserve to be in a violent and abusive relationship. If teens have previously been abused, they may believe that they are not worthy of better treatment. Consequently, they may accept being unhappy in a dating relationship because they believe they will never find someone better.
- > **False hopes:** A teen may want to be there to help a boyfriend or girlfriend — hoping that things will get better, or simply not realizing what can happen if the violence worsens. Teens also may think the ongoing violence will eventually stop. But dating violence is a pattern of behavior that's been established over a long period of time and will not stop on its own.
- > **Peer or family pressure:** The pressure to have a partner can be extreme. Pressuring comments from family and friends can make the whole situation more overwhelming by contributing to the victim's feelings of failure and aloneness. Teens also may be afraid of what their friends and family might think if they were single.
- > **Distrust of police:** Many young people, particularly immigrants and those in same-sex relationships, do not trust police and do not see the criminal courts as a source of help.
- > **Fear of being "outed":** Many young people in same-sex relationships do not want to have their sexual preference exposed or "outed."
- > **Lack of information/resources:** Teens often lack information about resources that may be available to those in violent dating relationships.

Teacher's Responsibility and Role in Teen Dating Violence Prevention

It's not the teacher's responsibility, or even role to then have to do something about it, because that's really outside the scope of what teachers are trained to do and what their role is in the school. But, it is important for teachers to realize that they are an important part of that school community, and the larger community, and there are resources that are available to help with these kinds of issues.

NOTEBOOK

Module 1 *Continued*

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Module 2: Lesson 1

Topics and Notes

Warning Signs for Teen Dating Violence

Ultimately, we want to prevent teen dating violence before it happens. This is known as primary prevention. The first step to preventing teen dating violence is to be able to recognize the warning signs that highlight the potential for both victimization and perpetration.

Warning Signs for Victimization

Warning Signs For Victimization:

These behaviors may indicate a teen is already a victim or has potential for becoming a victim of teen dating violence.

- > Isolation from family and friends
- > Loss of interest in activities and hobbies that were once enjoyable
- > Making excuses for a dating partner's behavior
- > Noticeable changes in eating or sleeping patterns, or alcohol or drug use
- > Loss of self-confidence

REMINDER: Dating violence can happen to both males and females, and can happen in opposite or same-sex relationships.

Warning Signs for Perpetration

Warning Signs For Perpetration:

These behaviors may indicate a young person is already a perpetrator, or has potential for becoming a perpetrator of teen dating violence.

- > Threatening to hurt others in any way
- > Insulting a dating partner in public or private
- > Insisting on walking a dating partner to each class
- > Damaging or destroying a dating partner's personal belongings
- > Attempting to control what a dating partner wears

REMINDER: Dating violence can happen to both males and females, and can happen in opposite or same-sex relationships.

Warning Signs for Educators

Warning Signs For Every Educator:

If you notice any of these signs when two students are dating, it may signal an unhealthy relationship.

- > Consistent school attendance problems.
- > A noticeable drop in grades.
- > A sudden request for school schedule changes.
- > A sudden, noticeable weight change.
- > Changes in behavior such as becoming passive or quieter than usual.
- > Isolation from social group.
- > Regular bruising or other injuries.
- > One teen seems to be controlling the other:

Physical: one person's arm is always firmly around the other person.

Social: one person monopolizes the other person's time

Electronic: one person is constantly checking in, paging, IM, cell phones, e-mails, etc.

Module 2: Lesson 2

Topics and Notes

Risk Factors for Teen Dating Violence

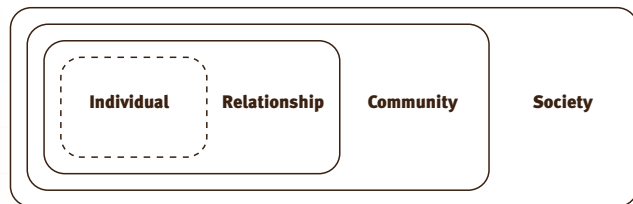
Violence is the result of a complex interplay of individual, relationship, social, cultural and environmental factors. Understanding how these factors relate to dating violence is one of the important steps in preventing violence from happening in the first place.

It is important to have prevention efforts on all levels of the social ecological model to impact individuals, relationships, communities, and our society. Then, we'll be well on our way to preventing teen dating violence.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *The presence of RISK FACTORS does not mean a teen will definitely be involved in violence.*

CDC uses Social Ecological Model to show levels of Risk

- > The CDC uses a Social Ecological Model to help us understand the factors that put people at risk for experiencing or perpetrating violence.
- > No single factor explains why some individuals behave violently toward others or why violence is more prevalent in some communities than in others.
- > Cultural and environmental factors that influence each of us individually, in our relationships, in our communities, and throughout our society can lead to violence.



INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

The individual level of the model identifies personal characteristics or biological factors. These factors may include things like age and gender. This level also recognizes personal history factors—experiences that people have been through that influence how they think and act.

RELATIONSHIP LEVEL

Interactions between two or more people in a close relationship exist on the relationship level. This level includes risk factors within the context of relationships with peers, intimate partners, and family members. A person's closest social circle influences their behavior.

COMMUNITY LEVEL

At the Community level, we are looking at settings or institutions in which social relationships take place such as schools, neighborhoods and workplaces. The characteristics of these settings influence how people interact with each other and affect the likelihood that a person may or may not become involved in violence.

SOCIETY LEVEL

On the fourth and largest level, we find the societal factors that influence rates of violence. Usually, interactions on this level include general or specific factors that create a level of acceptance or tolerance for violence – for instance, laws and policies surrounding violence prevention that are created and enforced; media portrayal of violence; climate of tolerance or discrimination regarding various groups of people – as well as things that create and sustain gaps between different segments of society, such as health, educational, economic or social policies. These values, norms, and opportunities affect our communities, our relationships, and individually. These conditions affect the likelihood a person may or may not become involved in violence.

Module 2: Lesson 2

Continued



Individual Level Risk Factors: Risks for Victimization

- > **Low Academic Achievement** — Teens who demonstrate poor performance in school or possess inadequate skills are at risk for engaging in violent behaviors or entering into violent relationships.
- > **Low Self-Esteem** — If a teen does not feel good about him or herself, he/she may be at risk for becoming overly dependent on his/her partner, and (potentially) a victim of violence.
- > **Emotional dependence/neediness** — Sometimes teens feel like they “need” to have a partner. They may be willing to give up their self-respect and safety to stay in any dating relationship, even a violent one.
- > **Emotional Issues** – Specific things to watch for include:
 - > **Depression**
 - > **Changes in personality** that do not seem to be part of typical adolescent “experimenting with identity” or “role playing”
 - > **Difficulty managing anger and hostility**
- > **Youth / Age Differences between Partners** – Teens who date much older partners are also more likely to become victims.
- > **Drugs and Alcohol** – For both sexes, the use of alcohol and drugs consistently has been found to be strongly associated with dating violence. Alcohol consumption is associated with impaired judgment, and heavy consumption can lead to blackouts and memory loss. This can make it harder for a person to think clearly and evaluate potential danger.

Alcohol use among today’s teens

- 7 out of 10 8th Graders think alcoholic beverages are “easy” to get
- 8 of 10 teens have consumed alcohol by the time they complete high school
- 3 out of 10 teens reported being drunk in the past month
- Nearly 3 in 10 teens reported having 5 or more drinks in a row in the past 2 weeks
- Alcohol use increases from middle school to high school

Self-reported alcohol consumption within the past 30 days:

- 8th Graders – 20%
- 10th Graders – 35%
- 12th Graders – 50%

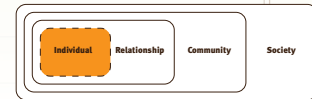
Self-reported being “drunk” at least once in their life:

- 8th Graders – 20%
- 10th Graders – 45%
- 12th Graders – 60%

- > **Acceptance of Traditional Gender Roles** – Believing that males should have more power and that females should be passive in relationships can place youth at risk for being a victim of teen dating violence.
- > **Belief that it is Acceptable to Use Violence to Resolve a Conflict** – Youth who believe that it is okay to use violence to resolve conflicts are more likely to think that violence they experience is okay.
- > **Behavioral Problems** – Youth who have other behavior problems, such as involvement in delinquent behavior, are more likely to be victims of dating violence
- > **Previous Experience with Violence** – Teens who have experienced physical violence at home or in previous dating relationships are more likely to be victims.

Module 2: Lesson 2

Continued



Individual Level Risk Factors: Risks for Perpetration

- > **Low Academic Achievement** — Teens who demonstrate poor performance in school or possess inadequate skills are at risk for engaging in violent behaviors or entering into violent relationships.
- > **Aggressive or Delinquent Behavior** — Teens with a history of engaging in violent behaviors are at risk for perpetrating violence against a dating partner.
- > **Low Self-Esteem** — If a teen does not feel good about him or herself, he/she may be at risk for becoming overly dependent on his/her partner, and (potentially) a perpetrator of violence.
 - **Emotional Issues** — Specific things to watch for include:
 - **Depression**
 - **Changes in personality** that do not seem to be part of typical adolescent “experimenting with identity” or “role playing”
 - Difficulty managing anger and hostility
- > **Drugs and Alcohol** — For both sexes, the use of alcohol and drugs consistently has been found to be strongly associated with dating violence. Alcohol consumption is associated with impaired judgment, and heavy consumption can lead to blackouts and memory loss. This can make it harder for a person to think clearly and evaluate potential danger.
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 - Self-reported alcohol consumption within the past 30 days:**
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- > **Acceptance of Traditional Gender Roles** — Believing that males should have more power and that females should be passive in relationships can place youth at risk for perpetrating teen dating violence.
- > **Belief that it is Acceptable to Use Violence to Resolve a Conflict** — Youth who believe that it is okay to use violence to resolve conflicts are more likely to do so.



Relationship Level Risk Factors for Victimization

- > **Unhealthy Family Relationships or Family Instability** — Studies suggest certain early childhood experiences may put individuals at greater risk of violence in their romantic relationships as adolescents and adults. For instance, adolescents who experience greater family instability, poor parenting, physical discipline, maltreatment or social disadvantage tend to date at a younger age. They also experience teen dating violence at higher-than-average rates.
- > **Lack of Parental Support** — The absence of parental support also has been examined as a risk factor. Specifically, poor relationships between teens and parents and harsh parenting practices are associated with delinquent behavior (more generally) and dating violence (specifically)
- > **Associating with Violent Friends or Peers** — Having friends who are violent or have violent tendencies increases the chance for experiencing dating violence — either as a perpetrator or a victim.

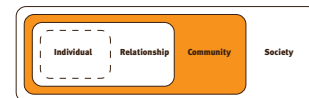
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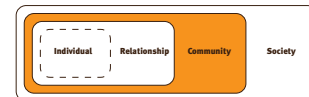
Relationship Level Risk Factors for Perpetration

- > **Greater relationship conflict** – When there is greater conflict in dating relationships, there is a higher risk for some teens to use violence.
- > **Having friends who are involved in violent dating relationships** – Having friends who are violent or have violent tendencies increases the chance for experiencing dating violence – either as a perpetrator or a victim.
- > **Negative same-sex peer relationships** – When teens have negative relationships with their peers, there is a higher risk that they will use violence in their dating relationships.
- > **Unhealthy family relationships** – Studies suggest certain early childhood experiences may put individuals at greater risk of violence in their romantic relationships as adolescents and adults. For instance, adolescents who experience greater family instability, poor parenting, physical discipline, maltreatment or social disadvantage tend to date at a younger age. They also experience teen dating violence at higher-than-average rates.



Community Level Risk Factors for Victimization

- > **Poverty / Low Family Income:** – Teen dating violence appears to occur in a wide range of socio economic strata (SES). Yet, two studies found higher rates of dating violence in low SES populations.
- > **Location** – Rates of inflicting physical violence against a dating partner appear to vary by region with the higher rates found in urban inner city areas, compared to suburban areas.
- > **Exposure to community violence** – Teen dating violence victimization is higher in community's that have higher rates of other types of violence to which youth are exposed.
- > **Weak Community Sanctions** – When laws designed to prevent violence are not enforced effectively the amount of violence increases.



Community Level Risk Factors for Perpetration

Community Level Risk Factors For Perpetration:

- > **Exposure to community violence** – Teen dating violence perpetration is higher in community's that have higher rates of other types of violence to which youth are exposed.
- > **Presence of bystanders** – Bystanders, especially those who believe that violence is acceptable, can often cause teens to “show off” in front of their friends/peers and increase risk of a teen's perpetration.
- > **Weak Community Sanctions** – When laws designed to prevent violence are not enforced effectively the amount of violence increases.



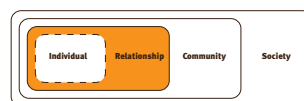
Societal Level Risk Factors

Evidence Currently Supports Traditional Gender Norms – For example, the belief that women should stay at home, not enter the workforce, and be submissive; men should support the family and make the decisions.

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Module 2: Lesson 3

Topics and Notes



Module 2 *Continued*

Protective Factors for Teen Dating Violence

Primary Prevention, or stopping a problem before it starts, not only requires us to recognize and understand risk factors, but we also need to concentrate on reinforcing protective factors. Protective factors are characteristics that provide a buffer against risk for violence.

The existence of PROTECTIVE FACTORS does not guarantee a teen will not be involved in violence.

Individual Level Protective Factors

On the individual level, educationally, economically and socially empowered teens are the most protected.

Individual Level Protective Factors

Some individual protective factors include:

- > Personal achievement
- > Caring about school
- > Feeling safe at school
- > Feeling connected to school

Relationship Level Protective Factors

On the relationship level, positive parental, or adult caregiver involvement has been shown to be effective at lowering aggression in youth. Teens also pay attention to how their adult role models manage conflict, make decisions, and behave toward others. This is the way teens learn how they should treat others in relationships and how they may expect to be treated.

Relationship Level Protective Factors

Parent and adult role models play a critical role by:

- > Setting positive examples for managing conflicts
- > Modeling positive relationship behaviors
- > Monitoring a teen's friends and activities
- > Protecting their young person from negative influences

Community & Societal Level Protective Factors

On the community and societal levels, research is ongoing to identify additional protective factors for teen dating violence.

NOTEBOOK

Module 2 *Continued*

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Module 3: Lesson 1

Topics and Notes

Teen Behavior Regarding Help in Violent Relationships

Preventing violence before it happens means that we need to promote the protective factors for healthy relationships, and reduce the risk factors for unhealthy relationships.

Only 40% of teens who had experienced dating violence at least once – asked for help. Of those teens who perpetrated dating violence at least once – nearly 80% report not asking for help.

Adolescents

- > May try to hide their behaviors
- > Don't want to hear judgment or comments
- > Like their privacy
- > Want to appear self-sufficient and knowledgeable
- > Don't know they need help
- > Don't realize how serious relationship problems may be

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:

Males and Females are affected by Teen Dating Violence

Common Excuses Justifying Unhealthy Behaviors

COMMON EXCUSES

- > "It's not violence."
- > "That's not abuse."
- > "I was just joking!"
- > "I was having a bad day."
- > "Jealousy is a normal part of any relationship."
- > "You got me upset."
- > "You made me angry."
- > "It only happened one time. It won't happen again."
- > "You deserved it."
- > "I was drunk."
- > "I was high."
- > "I deserve your trust, even if I messed up before."
- > "I should be more important than your friends."
- > "I wasn't trying to hurt you."

Teacher's Role in Teen Dating Violence Prevention

If unhealthy relationship behaviors are left unchecked, they may continue on into adult relationships. This can set teens up for future victimization or perpetration – and can affect the community as a whole.

What's important to realize though, is that it's not the teacher's responsibility to try to fix anything. What the teacher can do is pull in other resources to be able to help that student – whether that be someone inside the school or outside the school. So, perhaps the school counselor; perhaps the parents; and sometimes, if the problem is serious enough, you may actually need to involve law enforcement.

Module 3: Lesson 1

Continued

Because educators spend so much time with students on a daily basis, there is continuous opportunity to build trust and create an environment that allows and encourages open classroom discussions. These discussions can motivate teens toward developing healthy relationship skills for interactions with friends, dating partners – and even with adults.

Module 3: Lesson 2 Topics and Notes

Benefits of Healthy Dating Relationships for Teens

For adolescents, if they're in a healthy dating relationship – that's respectful, allows for mutual interest – that can actually help youth develop a better sense of confidence. This can help them in terms of their own identity development, help them become a more respectful partner, and it's good for both partners.

Young people need to learn healthy relationship behaviors now, to help prevent adult intimate partner violence later in life. Individuals and their partners have a responsibility to learn these behaviors, but as we discovered in the social ecological model, it is also the responsibility of the whole community and society in which we live

Characteristics of an Unhealthy Relationship

Unhealthy relationships are ones that look and sound imbalanced; where one partner is trying to control the other. One or both partners may use threats, intimidation, abusive or violent language, or name calling. There may be insults, or some belittling of one partner in front of others.

Unhealthy Relationship

- > Looks and sounds imbalanced
- > One partner tries to control the other
- > One or both partners uses:
 - Threats
 - Intimidation
 - Abusive or violent language
 - Name calling
 - Insults
 - Belittling in front of others
 - Isolation

Module 3: Lesson 2

Continued

Characteristics of Healthy Relationships

Healthy relationships are ones with open and honest communication, where both partners work together to make decisions. No relationship is completely conflict free – including healthy ones. But, how the partners resolve those conflicts is the key to staying healthy.

Healthy Relationship Characteristics

- > **Belief in Non-violent Conflict Resolution/ Anger Control** – Anger is OK. How we express that anger is what makes the difference between healthy and unhealthy behavior.
- > **Ability to Negotiate and Adjust to Stress**
- > **Good Communication/Open and Honest Communication** – Each partner needs to be able to say exactly what they mean without interruption.
- > **Partners Work Together to Make Decisions** – When partners work together to make decisions about the relationship or about pursuing their own interests, there is less chance for violence.
- > **Belief in Partner's Right to Autonomy** – Individuals in a respectful relationship need to be free to pursue their own interests, make their own decisions and take his/her own actions.
- > **Individuality** – When a person doesn't change what they do or who they are just to please their partner.
- > **Shared Decision Making**
- > **Trust- Partners** are able to rely on one another.
- > **Mutual Respect** – Each person values the other and understands personal boundaries.
- > **Honesty** – When someone says something, it's actually what they mean.
- > **Compromise** – Because each person is an individual, each partner likes to do different things. In order to do things together, they try to find a solution where they each get to do something they like.
- > **Fighting Fair** – When partners disagree and stick to the subject of the argument without getting emotional or insulting, they are more likely to find a solution to their trouble.
- > **Empathy** – People in healthy relationships take the time to figure out their partner's feelings.

Module 3: Lesson 3 Topics and Notes

Letting Students Know You are There for Them

We know from learning about primary prevention, that we really need to teach these healthy behaviors before teens start dating. This should happen before they have a chance to establish any unhealthy behaviors. If we model healthy behaviors, we can set a tone for relationships in our classrooms and schools. In turn, that tone may make its way into our communities.

It's not the role of a teacher to solve all the relationship problems a student may bring to us, but it is important for students to feel they can come to us in confidence for helpful information.

Ways to Let Students Know You are There for Them

- > Keep an Open Environment
- > Give Your Student Your Undivided Attention
- > Connect Frequently
- > Understand the Question and Respond Genuinely
- > Teach Healthy Relationship Behaviors to Teens
- > Teach Good Conduct
- > Teach Respectful Conversation and Communication
- > Teach Negotiation and Compromise

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Module 3: Lesson 3

Continued

What Teachers Can Do

- > Serve as a resource for students
- > Create a respectful classroom environment
- > Implement curriculum focusing on teen dating violence prevention
- > Make sure your students know it is OK to ask for help with problems – they don't have to handle problems on their own.
- > Model healthy behaviors— Teens watch how adults handle and react to different situations. Modeling healthy behavior in the school and classroom starts with each one of us. If we do not practice what we preach, our students may tune us out when we talk about the importance of healthy relationships.
- > Familiarize yourself with resources within your school, *including*:
 - Counselors
 - Nurses
 - Psychologists
 - Social workers
- > Look at School Policies on Dating Violence
 - If violence has already occurred
 - If a student has a protection order
- > Know School Policies on *How the School Responds to*:
 - Violence in hallways
 - Violence in classrooms

It Takes A Whole Community To Prevent Violence

- > Each of us has a role in the lives of students
- > We need to model healthy, positive relationship behaviors
- > We need to set an example for our teens to follow
- > We set the tone for relationships in our students' lives
- > **Together, we can prevent teen dating violence**

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Module 3 *Continued*

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